

incomplete hollow cylinder of the bobbin 310. Similarly, the length of the folding/unfolding axis winding part 404 is decided according to the number of turns and a diameter of the folding/unfolding shaft 305. With regard to each portion 402 or 403, the number of turns is usually two or three.

In FIG. 7B, the FPC 400R.2 has the same structure as the FPC 400R.1 of FIG. 7A except shape of connector-side end portions of the rotating axis winding part 402 and the folding/unfolding axis winding part 404.

Referring to FIG. 7C, the FPC 400L.1 has a first connector 401 to be connected to the circuit board provided in the lower unit 100. A rotating axis winding part 402 is for being wound around the rotative direction wound portion 350. A fixing part 405 is for being fixed by the FPC holding member 320 and the FPC fixing member 340. A folding/unfolding axis winding part 406 (corresponding to the fourth part mentioned above) is for being wound around the left-hand folding/unfolding direction wound portion 351. A second connector 407 is for connecting with the circuit board provided in the upper unit 200.

The fixing part 405 includes a vertical part 405a to be extended from the bobbin 310 and sandwiched between the guide plate 329 and the pressing plate 344, and a horizontal part 405b to be sandwiched between the holding plate 321 and the pressing plate 341 and extended to the left-hand folding/unfolding direction wound portion 351 along the guide arm 322.

The length of the rotating axis winding part 402 and the folding/unfolding axis winding part 406 is decided like the FPC 400R.1 of FIG. 7A.

In FIG. 7D, the FPC 400L.2 has the same structure as the FPC 400L.1 of FIG. 7C except shape of connector-side end portions of the rotating axis winding part 402 and the folding/unfolding winding part 406.

Referring to FIG. 8, the description will be made about a process for attaching two FPCs 400L.1 (or 400L.2) and 400R.1 (or 400R.2) to the hinge mechanism.

First, the FPCs 400L.1 and 400R.1 are partially placed on the holding plate 321 and the guide plate 329 so that one of the FPCs 400L.1 and 400R.1 is laid on the other in large part. The fixing member 340 is fixed to the holding member 320 by the means of hooks 326-328 and 330-331 so that the fixing portion 403 and 405 are sandwiched between the FPC holding member 320 and the FPC fixing member 340 and fixed by them. Specifically, the pressing plate 341 is fixed by the hooks 326-328 and the pressing plate 344 is fixed by the hooks 330 and 331.

Next, the resulting set of the FPC holding member 320, FPC fixing member 340 and FPCs 400L.1 and 400R.1 is attached to the hinge unit 300a. This is accomplished by fitting the guide plates 324 and 325 to the folding/unfolding shaft 305, and clipping the outer cases of the folding/unfolding resistance generating portions 308a and 308b with the clips 342 and 343. In this time, the holding member 320 prevents the FPCs 400L.1 and 400R.1 from coming into contact with the hinge unit. Accordingly, assembly is easy to be made.

While the set including the FPCs 400L.1 and 400R.1 is attached to the hinge unit 300a, the fixing parts 403 and 405 of the FPCs are partially put in the notch 314 of the bobbin 310 combined with hinge unit 300a. Accordingly, the rotating axis winding parts 402 of the FPCs 400L.1 and 400R.1 can be wound around the rotative direction wound portion 350 in this condition. The rotating axis winding parts 402 of the FPCs are loosely wound from the inner side to the outer side in a spiral shape around the rotative direction wound portion 350. Furthermore, the folding/unfolding axis wind-

ing part 406 of the FPC 400L.1 is loosely wound from the inner side to the outer side in a spiral shape around the left-hand folding/unfolding direction wound portion 351. Similarly, the folding/unfolding axis winding part 404 of the FPC 400R.1 is loosely wound from the inner side to the outer side in a spiral shape around the right-hand folding/unfolding direction wound portion 352. Thus, the wiring device is completed. The wiring device is shown in FIG. 9.

The rotating axis winding parts 402 of FPCs are tightened by rotation of the upper unit 200 in the same direction as a winding direction thereof. On the other hand, when the upper unit 200 rotates in inverse direction, the rotating axis winding parts 402 are loosened. This is true with respect to the folding/unfolding axis winding parts 404 and 406. Therefore, the FPC merely receives small stress when the upper unit 200 is folded/unfolded and/or rotated in relation to the lower unit 100. This lengthens the lifetimes of the FPCs 400L.1 and 400R.1.

For the small stress given to each FPC, it is desirable that the number of turns of each winding parts 402, 404 or 406 is equal to or more than two. In particular, two or three is desirable in consideration of the loosed winding diameter of each winding parts.

The wiring device mentioned above has two FPCs. However, the number of FPCs is not limited to two in this embodiment. For instance, as shown in FIG. 10 or 11, the only left-side or right side FPC maybe included in the wiring device. Furthermore, the wiring device may have three or more FPCs. For example, the four FPCs illustrated in FIGS. 7A-7D can be used. When the three or more FPCs is used, the FPCs for the left-side folding/unfolding direction wound portion 351 and the FPCs for the right-side folding/unfolding direction wound portion 352 are alternately laid.

Thus, the hinge structure of this embodiment can deal with various numbers of FPCs without modification thereof. Therefore, it is unnecessary to widen a width of one FPC because a plurality FPCs can be used for a large number of signal lines. Use of the wide FPC needs long rotating axis and long folding/unfolding axis. However, the hinge structure of this embodiment is not actually affected by the number of signal lines because the plural FPCs having a predetermined width can be used.

Additionally, if the folding/unfolding shaft 305 is reduced in diameter at the left-hand and the right-hand folding/unfolding direction wound portions 351 and 352, the folding mobile phone can be made smaller and thinner since the winding diameter of the FPC wound around the take-up portions 351 and 352 can be made smaller.

Still furthermore, a T shaped FPC may be used with the hinge structure. The T shaped FPC is, for example, a form such that the FPC 400R.1 of FIG. 4A is laid on the FPC 400L.1. The T shaped FPC combined with the hinge mechanism is illustrated in FIGS. 12 and 13. FIGS. 12 and 13 are an oblique perspective view and a plane view of the hinge mechanism with the T shaped FPC. Two or more T shape FPC may be also used with the hinge structure.

While this invention has thus far been described in conjunction with the preferred embodiment thereof, it will readily be possible for those skilled in the art to put this invention into practice in various other manners.

For example, the hinge structure may be used for a folding small size information device (or portable information terminal) such as a personal digital assistant (PDA).

What is claimed is:

1. A wiring device for use in a folding portable device including an upper unit, a lower unit and a hinge unit mechanically connecting said upper unit to said lower unit,